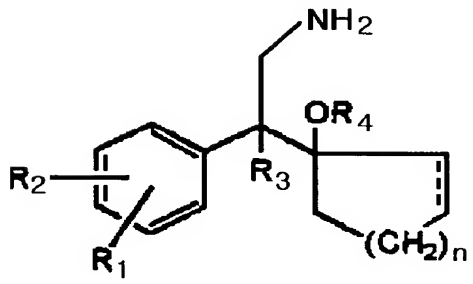
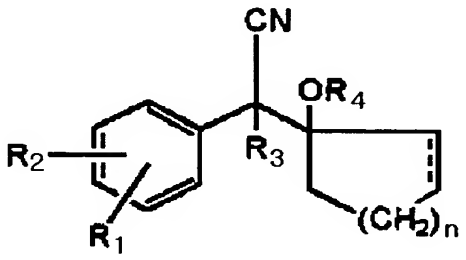
In the claims:

Claim 1 (Currently amended) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula I,



(I)

wherein R_1 and R_2 are ortho or para substituents, independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, hydroxyl, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, C_7-C_9 aralkoxy, C_2-C_7 alkanoyloxy, C_1-C_6 alkylmercapto, halo and trifluoromethyl; R_3 is hydrogen or C_1-C_6 alkyl ; R_4 is hydrogen, C_1-C_6 alkyl, formyl or C_2-C_7 alkanoyl; n is one of the integers 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4; and the dotted line represents optional olefinic unsaturation;
comprising, hydrogenating a compound of formula III,



(III)

in the presence of an alkaline nickel or cobalt catalyst wherein the catalyst has not been pretreated in an acid, and from about 0.5 to about 1.5 equivalent of the compound of formula III of ammonia solution, at a temperature of about 10ºC to about 20ºC.

Claim 2 (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the catalyst is Raney-Ni.

Claims 3 – 4 (Cancelled)

Claim 5 (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein hydrogenation is carried out in the presence of methanol, ethanol or isopropyl alcohol.

Claim 6 (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein the amount of catalyst is from about 10 to about 50% by weight based on the amount of the compound of formula III.

Claim 7 (Original) The process of Claim 6 wherein the amount of catalyst is from about 30 to about 50% by weight based on the amount of the compound of formula III.

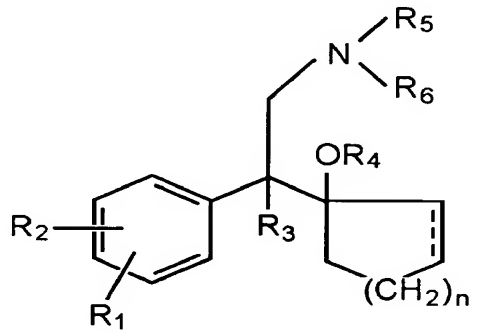
Claim 8 (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein R_1 is hydrogen, hydroxyl, C_1-C_3 alkoxy, chloro, bromo, trifluoromethyl or C_1-C_3 alkyl; R_2 is C_1-C_3 alkyl, C_1-C_3 alkoxy, chloro, bromo, trifluoromethyl or C_2-C_3 alkanoyloxy; R_3 is hydrogen or C_1-C_6 alkyl; and R_4 is hydrogen.

Claim 9 (Cancelled)

Claim10 (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein the compound of Formula I is 1-[2-amino-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)ethyl]cyclohexanol.

Claim 11 (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein the compound of Formula I is 1-[2-amino-1-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]cyclohexanol.

Claim 12 (Original) The process of Claim 1 further comprising alkylating the compound of formula (I) to provide compound of Formula (II)



(II)

wherein R_1 and R_2 are ortho or para substituents, independently selected from the group

consisting of hydrogen, hydroxyl, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, C_7-C_9 aralkoxy, C_2-C_7 alkanoyloxy, C_1-C_6 alkylmercapto, halo and trifluoromethyl; R_3 is hydrogen or C_1-C_6 alkyl ; R_4 is hydrogen, C_1-C_6 alkyl, formyl or C_2-C_7 alkanoyl; R_5 is hydrogen or C_1-C_6 alkyl; R_6 is C_1-C_6 alkyl; n is one of the integers 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4; and the dotted line represents optional olefinic unsaturation.

Claim 13 (Original) The process of Claim 12, further comprising conversion of the compound of formula (II) to a pharmaceutically acceptable salt.

Claim 14 (Original) The process according to Claim 13, wherein the compound of formula II is venlafaxine, O-desmethylvenlafaxine, N-desmethylvenlafaxine, N,N-didesmethylvenlafaxine, N,O-didesmethylvenlafaxine or O-desmethyl-N,N-didesmethylvenlafaxine, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

Claims 15 – 19 (Cancelled)